

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 307

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 1284

E.O. 11652:NA

TAGS: GT, SWEL,

SUBJ: HANDLING OF SUPPLIES FROM DONOR NATIONS

1. MISSION REPRESENTATIVES TODAY TOURED GOG EMERGENCY COMMITTEE WAREHOUSES AND MET WITH GOG AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE WAREHOUSES AND DISPOSITION OF SUPPLIES. THE FOLLOWING IS A REPORT OF THE MISSION REPRESENTATIVE OBSERVATIONS. THIS MATERIAL MAY BE HELPFUL TO ADMINISTRATOR PARKER IN UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY.

2. THE GOG EMERGENCY COMMITTEE HAS FOUR MAIN WAREHOUSES LOCATED AT THE AIRPORT. THE COMMITTEE INFORMS US THAT THE GOG DOES NOT HAVE ANY OTHER WAREHOUSES STORING FOREIGN DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS OTHER THAN THOSE AT THE AIRPORT AND THE ONE AT THE ADOLFO HALL INSTITUTE (SEE GUATEMALA 1236). THE FOLLOWING ARE OBSERVATIONS OF THE WAREHOUSES.

3. CLOTHING WAREHOUSE: BOXES OF CLOTHES ARE STACKED IN TEN FOOT HIGH MOUNDS IN THE WAREHOUSE; A PATH ABOUT THREE FEET WIDE CUTS ITS WAY THROUGH TO THE BACK OF THE WAREHOUSE. AT THE BACK ARE BEDS, BOX SPRINGS AND FRAMES WHICH HAVE ALSO BEEN SENT IN. NO EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO SORT THE CLOTHES INTO LOGICAL PILES, I.E. SHIRTS, PANTS, ETC. BECAUSE OF THE HIGH INFUX OF CLOTHES, THE COMMITTEE FEELS IT IS BEST TO SHIP THE BOXES OF CLOTHES OUT INTACT. THERE ARE THE USUAL ANOMALIES: WHITE CORFAM HIGH HEELS FOR A FOOT WHICH MUST BE TWO SIZES EXCEED ANY FOOT SO FAR SEEN IN FAIRLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINDS

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OF INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING. WE OPENED A BOX MARKED MEDICAL

SUPPLIES FROM ATLANTA WHICH CONSISTED OF A SET OF BLUE GREY HOSPITAL GOWNS, WHICH HOPEFULLY WILL REACH THE HOSPITALS RATHER THAN THE HIGHLANDS. MOST OF THE CLOTHES HOWEVER DO APPEAR TO BE FUNCTIONAL IF, OF COURSE, THE INDIANS WILL WEAR THEM.

4. MEDICAL SUPPLY WAREHOUSE: AT FIRST SIGHT THE SUPPLIES SEEM TO BE SCATTERED IN AS HAPHAZARD A FASHION AS ARE THE CLOTHING. HOWEVER IN TWO CORNER OF THE WAREHOUSE, THERE ARE SUPPLIES WHICH ARE NEEDED AND USABLE. THESE SUPPLIES CONSIST MAINLY OF INTRAVENOUS SOLUTION, 5 CC SYRINGES, GAUZE AND BANDAGE AND BROAD SPECTRUM ANTIBIOTICS. THE BULK OF THE REMAINING SUPPLIES ARE PRIMARILY SAMPLES WHICH COME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. WE OPENED A SMALL BOX OF SUPPLIES FROM A CITY IN THE US, MARKED MEDICAL SUPPLIES. THE BOX CONSISTED OF SAMPLES, SOME OF WHICH INCLUDED: MONDANE (USED FOR CONSTIPATIO; THESE SAMPLES CAME COMPLETE WITH DOODLING ON THE SAMPLES IN CONTAINED); A TUBE OF USED NEO-SPORIN; EXPECTORANT; AND VECTRIN. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE PROVIDED TWO US PHARMACISTS WHO ARE WORKING WITH LOCAL PHARMACISTS TO SORT THROUGH THE SAMPLES AND OTHER SUPPLIES. THE BULK OF THE SORTING IS DONE IN THE ADOLFO HALL WAREHOUSE WHERE THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 38 TONS OF SUPPLIES.

5. FOOD SUPPLY WAREHOUSE: THIS WAREHOUSE APPEARS TO BE THE BEST ORGANIZED. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS ARE PACKED BY VOLUNTEERS INTO STURDY PLASTIC BAGS TO BE SHIPPED TO REMOTE AREAS; EACH BAG PROVIDES ENOUGH FOOD FOR ONE FAMILY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY HOW LONG EACH BAG WOULD LAST A FAMILY; PERHAPS A WEEK AT THE OUTSET. WE OPENED A BOX OF FOOD FROM THE US WHICH CONTAINED SUCH CANNED ITEMS AS: CLAM CHOWDER; YAMS; PATE OF WHITE MEAT WITH WINE; BEANS, VIENNA SAUSAGE; GOLDEN CORN CREAM STYLE; SALT, AND RAISIN BRAN(UNCANNED). THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE INFORMED US THAT CANNED SWEETS ARE THE MOST DESIRED OF CANNED GOODS; BEANS, CORN, FLOUR AND RICE ARE THE MOST DESIRED UNCANNED STAPLES. IT WAS NOTED THAT THE MEXICANS HAD TRUCKED REPEAT TRUCKED BAGGED BEANS , CORN AND RICE FOR WHICH THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE WAS PARTICULARLY APPRECIATIVE. WE ALSO LEARNED THAT THE INDIANS WILL THROW AWAY CANNED HAM, OR FEED IT TO THEIR HOGS; THE SAME GOES FOR CHILI CON CARNE.

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6. SHELTER: THERE IS ALSO AN OPEN FACED STRUCTURE WHICH HOUSES TENTS. OF PARTICULAR NOTE WERE BAGGED TENTS FROM PALISTAN. THE POLES ACCOMPANYING THESE TENTS WERE STURDY AND IN AN UNFINISHED NATURAL STATE.

7. COMMENT: THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE TO NOT TURN THE AFFLICTED INTO BEGGARS. THE

COMMITTEE IS TRYING TO DELIVER FOOD TO THOSE MOST IN NEED;
THE COMMITTEE FEELS THAT FOOD CAN BECOME A DISINCENTIVE FOR
PEOPLE AS THEY ATTEMPT TO HARVEST THEIR WHEAT CROP AND RE-
BUILD THEIR HOMES. ON EXAMPLE WAS GIVEN OF A TOWN WHERE
THE RESIDENTS WAIT FOR THE HELICOPTERS WITH THEIR "HANDS IN
THEIR POCKETS" (MEANING THAT THEY WOULDN'T EVEN UN-
LOAD THE HELICOPTER) WAITING TO BE FED. THE COMMITTEE HAS
BEEN SHIPPING APPROXIMATELY ONE MILLION POUNDS (VERY ROUGH
ESTIMATE) OF CLOTHES, FOOD AND MEDICINES A DAY. ONLY 5 PCT OF
THEIR INTERNATIONALLY DONATED STOCKS ARE FROM US PRIVATE
SOURCES. THE COMMITTEE NOTED THAT THE BULK OF U.S. IN KIND
ASSISTANCE DOES NOT COME THRU COMMITTEE CHANNELS, BUT IS
CHANNELED THROUGH THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES. THE COMMITTEE
REPRESENTATIVES CLEARLY FEEL THAT THE EMERGENCY RELIEF
STAGE IS OVER AND ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO RECONSTRUCTION.
FOR EXAMPLE, ONE COMMITTEE MEMBER SUGGESTED THAT THE
CLOTHES AND FOOD STILL IN STOCK SHOULD BE USED IN SOMETHING
AKIN TO A FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAM TO ACT AS AN INCENTIVE
TO ENCOURAGE THE FARMERS TO RETURN TO THEIR CROPS.
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